

## SYDNEY'S TOP 10 MOST WALKABLE SUBURBS



Photo: James Brackwood

**1 Newtown** Scores 100 (walker's paradise) on [walkscore.com](http://walkscore.com) and certainly is walkable, particularly if you work at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital or attend Sydney University.

**2 Elizabeth Bay** Professionals walk to the city but return to vibrant nightlife and good restaurants close to home. It rates 97 out of 100 on [walkscore.com](http://walkscore.com).

**3 Pyrmont** A growing media hub with Google, Fairfax and channels Seven and Ten, among others. Pyrmont is perched next to the city.

**4 Westmead** OK, you can't walk to the city but it's perfect if you work in Parramatta (it's nearby). The apartments are cheap and there are great transport links. Especially if the West Metro proceeds – Westmead will be one of the stations.

**5 Hurstville** This suburb is walkable because it's a self-contained hub, with everything you need in one spot.

**6 Bondi Junction** Another all-in-one-area hub, with terrific transport links.

**7 Chatswood** This suburb has been a CBD in its own right for some time. The revamped interchange provides the transport hub that makes it easy to access anywhere from the northern beaches to the CBD or out to Epping.

**8 Leichhardt** Another walker's paradise, Leichhardt offers residents the chance to stroll down to Iron Cove – the site of the Bay Run – or visit the dog park or Norton Plaza and sip espresso.

**9 Manly** You can walk to the Manly ferry, for a glorious trip to work (if you have time – it beats trundling along Military Road). At home, you have access to some of Sydney's best beaches.

**10 Kirribilli** Milsons Point Station is close by, along with shops, cafes and restaurants. The suburb is dotted with small art deco blocks that can be bought for less than \$1 million but may soon rise in price.

Source: Herron Todd White

higher levels of "walkability" panned out as higher home values. According to the report, just one extra Walk Score point means a home-value rise of between \$US500 (\$557) and \$US3000.

The findings apply to Australia, in the view of McNamara, who sums up walkability as "desirability". The lust for properties near transport, work, community facilities and other attractions must drive higher prices, he says.

He cites the price gap between walkable and adjoining car-heavy suburbs. Think Newtown versus Marrickville, Manly versus Freshwater, even Chatswood versus Willoughby.

According to McNamara, for the privilege of walkable addresses, buyers gladly pay up to 20 per cent more. As congestion increases, expect the differential to sharpen, he says.

What buyers who pay the walkability whack lose financially, they may gain in health. A 2003

Washington State study found the average pedestrian-friendly neighbourhood resident weighed three kilograms less than someone in SUV sprawl.

Soon, we may all burn more calories because – thanks to peak oil – the death of the car is near, according to Lee Rhiannon, a Greens MP in the NSW Upper House. Rhiannon predicts that oil prices will "skyrocket".

"In the long term, car travel will decline and with it the pressure on parking," Rhiannon says.

"Active transport, including walking and cycling, will be the bread and butter of a future where oil is severely limited and prices are volatile," she adds. Already, as petrol prices and congestion grow, Sydney is undergoing what she calls "a cycling renaissance". So, by default, the whole city could one day blossom into a walker's paradise – full marks all round.